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Beyond the Bubble

a look at life outside Illinois Wesleyan University

What is your major(s)/minor(s)?

LS: I am a business administration major with a concentration in marketing and an art minor.

KB: I am majoring in political science and have a minor in English.

Can you explain the program you are participating in through ACM?

LS: I am currently in the Arts Program with ACM, which consists of an art seminar, independent study course, internship, and a core course that focuses on studying Chicago's history. In the arts seminar we study art in general, mainly that of Chicago artists. The independent study gives the student time to produce any form of artwork that he or she wants.

KB: I'm a student in the Urban Studies program. In addition to my class on food justice in the urban environment, I also participate in community engagement projects, an internship, and will complete and independent study project by the end of the semester.

What made you interested in applying to this?

LS: I applied for this program because I wanted to have the experience of study-

ing off-campus somewhere exciting and new. I've lived 40 minutes away from the city my entire life, but I have never known it the way I do now. The idea of having an internship in the city that I will, most likely, end up after graduation sold the program for me.

KB: I knew that I wanted to spend a semester off campus before I even got to IWU, so I spent most of last year narrowing down my options. In the end, I was most swayed by the location and reputation of the program. Despite being from the Chicagoland area, before this program, I did not have much experience with the activist parts of the city, and a large part of our curriculum in urban studies focuses upon social justice and the various ways in which different organizations and communities relate to one another within the city.

What is a typical day like at your internship?

LS: I intern at the Museum of Contemporary Art in the marketing department. I'm getting the chance to see what working in a well-established museum is like, while still gaining knowledge about marketing. I typically do the traditional intern work in the mornings and after lunch I get to call any and every small business I can think of to ask for donations to the museum's monthly events.

KB: I'm interning with the Service-Learning Office for the Chicago Public Schools. CPS students have a graduation requirement that involves service-learning in some way, so our purpose is to develop ways of making that experience more meaningful and integrated with classroom activities. The morning is



spent doing administrative and preparatory work for various meetings, conferences, events, and initiatives which the Office of Service-Learning provides for students. My afternoons are generally spent doing site visits with different student leadership organizations around the city, because I'm working closely with a city-wide organization of student leaders called the Harris Fellows to prepare for their annual winter conference.

Has this influenced what you want to do as a career?

LS: I'm learning people skills, and what to expect to be doing in a professional career. I'm much closer to knowing what I want to do in the future. I hope to do well here and potentially earn a permanent position at the MCA.

KB: Absolutely it has. I knew before I came that I wanted to be in some way involved in non-profit work, but I really had no idea what I wanted to do. I hope to work after graduation on issues relating to educational disparities that negatively affect low-income students in urban areas.



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Career Connections

a newsletter from the hart career center

November 2011

IWU Alum Dazzles Audiences Worldwide with Dreamworks

During homecoming weekend, Illinois Wesleyan honored 1985 graduate, Bill Damaschke as its 2011 Distinguished Alumnus. At his presentation, "Bringing Animation to Life," the chief creative officer of Dreamworks Animation made the joke, "I'm terrible with technology," as he pretended to fumble over slideshow software. With his degree in music theatre, it is surprising that Damaschke would find himself in a career that centers on something monumentally different from what he studied. But to him, that transition was not so strange.

Damaschke started with Dreamworks in 1995 as a production assistant for the award-winning movie, *The Prince of Egypt*. The company was only a year old at that point.

"I got to the studio when it was pretty much brand new," he said. "I was the 46th person hired. I was 30 years old and trying to make a career as an actor. But once I got to Dreamworks, I was committed to working with animation. I worked hard to learn about how our movies were made and moved through positions very quickly."

Damaschke continued to move up through the ranks until he was named chief creative officer this year. His duties center around bringing every department of Dreamworks together in communication and collaboration.

"Essentially, my job at Dreamworks is

the same as it was at IWU," he said, changing to another slide. "I'm a cheerleader." The picture showed him holding a fellow cheerleader above his head.

Dreamworks itself is a highly innovative and ground-breaking company. As of today, it has made 23 animated films with the goal of making five movies every two years. It is the only entertainment company in *Fortune Magazine's* "100 Best Companies to Work For" list, ranking at 10th place. The studio has expanded to three locations, two in California and one in India. In 2001, it won its first Academy Award and then went public in 2004.

"It's taken us a long time to get good at what we do," Damaschke said. "I love my job because we spend half our day worrying about things this week and the other half worrying about movies we're going to make in 2017."

That type of mindset is not entirely off the mark for Dreamworks. For a single movie, it takes around three and a half years for production alone and at least one year of story development before that. Moving a film sequence through what Damaschke calls "the pipeline" of departments takes about 30 weeks, and there are between 20 and 30 sequences in a film. Animators create around three seconds of animation per week, 55.8 million render hours can go into lighting for a film, and 1175 paintings were created for Dreamworks' most recent film, *Puss in Boots*.

"All of these departments collaborate together in a very deep way," he said. "Nothing is ever a straight line. It's all about collaboration, creativity, and communication at Dreamworks."

As for people who are interested in this field, or individuals who are not



Photo courtesy of zimbio.com

sure what they want to do at all, Damaschke offered unique advice.

"It's really important to be interested in a lot of things," he said. "Curiosity about other things in the world is essential. If you think you know what you want to do, you are wrong. So get involved with as much as you can."

"You'd never think that being a music theatre major would help me with my future life. But it gave me experience in interaction with people and working on a team. Of the 2,000 people working with Dreamworks, about 1,600 are artists. That tends to be a highly sensitive group of people. In order to get a lot of people working toward a common goal, I need to focus on communication. People will say, 'But I already told them!' 'Yes, but no one heard you.' It's crucial to make sure you communicate until you are heard."

As an overall statement about his life after IWU and pursuing a career with Dreamworks, Damaschke summed everything up like this.

"I've learned that good things take patience. You need to focus on things and love them to make them grow."

Inside this Issue

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Employers tell all!

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What should I do with my
time off from school?

What Do Employers Look For, Anyway?

When I was in high school, I never had a summer job. Part of that was due to the fact I turned 16 in the middle of the summer, and the other part of that was because my friend ran my foot over with his car, leaving me in a cast for the hottest summer ever. (That pool in my backyard looked lovely...) So I don't have personal experience in flipping burgers, bagging groceries, or pushing carts, but I can tell you all about my friends' experiences. I can also tell you about all of the times they didn't get a job or were fired from a job because they ended up not meeting their supervisors' expectations. At 21 years old, there are a lot of things I could have told my younger self and her friends. But I will let the pros explain.

Aaron Rehberg is the District Facilities Manager for the Central Illinois market for Target. He currently leads a team of Facilities Technicians and oversees twelve Target locations in addition to managing a \$6 million portfolio to keep Target stores running smoothly. One of his core responsibilities is to seek out and develop talent for the company.

"I am the recruiting captain at Illinois Wesleyan University, and I interact with students year-round," Rehberg said. "I look for candidates who are full of energy and who are open to learning. Since Target is very team-oriented, the candidate should have experience working in teams and should work well with others. I ask myself, 'Would I want to work for this person?'"

Doug Johnson, McLean County Arts Center's Executive Director, also interacts with college students frequently. He has participated in internship fairs in the area and interviews candidates for several positions throughout the year.

"The skills I look for are the same as would most other fields: hard work, strong verbal skills, the ability to synthesize known qualities into a larger whole, humor, and a sense of teamwork," he said. "Being an arts agency, we may hang our hat on those characteristics of creativity, but they are no more important here than any other forward-thinking industry. I doubt any business or technical field would desire a staffer who is not firing on all cylinders."

Sara Reeves is the Director of Human Resources at marcfirst, a non-profit organization focused on assisting people

with developmental disabilities. She constantly interacts with college students throughout the semester, hiring them for internships as well as volunteer opportunities.

"A candidate that has volunteered in their field or led student activities on campus related to their major or minor really stands out in job applications," Reeves said. "Someone who has volunteered in the community or shares ways they have helped their family also is a great candidate."

Oftentimes, these employers encounter students who do not meet their criteria for candidates. Generally, these types of individuals share similar characteristics.

"Occasionally, students will have an expectation of familiarity, and what they may understand as being casual is instead interpreted as laziness," Johnson said. "With that said, we find that Illinois Wesleyan students are exceptionally professional and diligent, which is why we have relied on these interns for significant projects."

"The first mistake that I see quite a bit is when students speak negatively about a previous employer or boss," Rehberg said. "This does nothing to build trust with the new employer and could potentially derail your chances."

"Another mistake to avoid is trying to be someone you are not. Nobody wins in this scenario. Prospective employers are trying to get to know the 'real you' so they can predict organizational fit. Be yourself and be open about what values you look for in a company. It's important to remember that employers want you to be successful just as much as you do."

"One of the biggest mistakes students make in interviews or job fairs is not asking questions relative to their interests with marcfirst or making enthusiastic comments regarding their field of study," Reeves said. "You must have confidence in your abilities and promote yourself in a positive manner. Body language and eye contact are important. Walk up to the booth with confidence and shake hands. Some students will approach our display and stand back, which gives an impression of uncertainty."

First impressions always prove to be the key to leaving a good impact on employers. A lot can be determined about a

The Dos and Don'ts

DO:

- Be full of energy
- Be open to learning
- Show teamwork skills
- Develop strong verbal skills
- Highlight relevant work and volunteer experience
- Develop leadership experience

DON'T:

- Be negative about past work
- Be unauthentic
- Lack knowledge about company
- Act disinterested or unenthusiastic

person just from that initial encounter.

"I look for students that are genuinely excited about the possibility of coming to work for us," Rehberg said. "Things that might seem small, yet don't go unnoticed, are firm handshakes, good eye contact, and of course, authentic smiles. I am always impressed when a student drops a fact or two about Target, whether it be from our website or a recent story in the news."

"Be sure to dress appropriately," Johnson said. "Sell your skills, not your needs. Students should also demonstrate appreciation of past success and enthusiasm for future opportunities."

As an overall statement, practice, confidence, and preparation can all put a candidate above the others in an interview or job fair. Conveying a sense of enthusiasm and interest is crucial to standing out.

"Know something about the organization and be confident in yourself," Reeves said. "Be passionate about your goals, yet brief and professional."

"Practice is the key to improving your professionalism," Rehberg said. "Attend career events on campus and put yourself in professional environments to get more practice. Never lose sight of an opportunity to collect feedback. Seeking out feedback from classroom presentations, summer internships, and mock interviews is a great way to help you identify ways to improve your professionalism."

Make the Most of your Holiday Breaks!



Image: graur razvan ionut / FreeDigitalPhotos.net

I think I love Christmas more than most people. I know it's difficult to hate it, but I'm the type of person who never tires of hearing Christmas music, or watching lame Christmas movies, or looking at the snow while I'm curled up in a warm sweater or blanket. Note how I said *look* at the snow and not *walk* in the snow. Thanksgiving is a bit more bearable, weather-wise, but I'm still happy to stay in my house with my family and watch football. But in that time when you're celebrating whatever holiday you love, or choosing to just enjoy the time you have to yourself, make sure to remember to use a little bit of that to cross some things off your to-do list.

1. Apply for fellowships, scholarships, or graduate schools

For most of these opportunities, the deadline is in January or February. Don't be left out! Make sure your letters of recommendation are ready (your professors are on break, too, you know...) and that your personal statement is in top shape. This is the perfect time to get writing done since there aren't any other essays demanding your time.

2. Volunteer or job shadow

A lot of people feel that they can't get this done during the year because of other commitments, both in and out of classes. There are plenty of places that need volunteers during these busy winter months, and many companies are happy to have students come by during this time. So don't forget!

3. Have an informational interview about your career field

People tend to love talking about

what they do. That makes it easy to ask important questions about where you're thinking about working someday. One of my favorite resources for this is the Titan Mentoring Network, which allows you to connect with volunteering alums and email them questions about their job. So over break, give it a shot! You can access it through Titan CareerLink.

4. Update your resume or cover letter

I know. I hate cover letters, too. Whoever invented them is not my friend. But most job openings require that you submit a cover letter, and just about all of them ask for a resume. So before you leave for break, stop by the Career Center to have one of our staff members show you how to get started with your professional documents. You can take them home and edit.

5. Buy professional clothing

We all love getting money as a gift. Use some of that to buy outfits for your next interview or job fair. It's important to look put together and confident, and the way you dress shows employers that from the start.

6. Apply for summer internships or full-time jobs

Although spring internship applications will be wrapping up in the winter, it's not too early to apply for summer ones! And it's never too early to apply for jobs. Go on Titan CareerLink to look up opportunities that we have posted, upload your shiny new resume, and submit your application. It really only takes a couple of minutes to do that.

7. Network, network, network

Remember that organization you volunteered with in high school? Do you still keep in contact with them? Now is a good time to reconnect with past supervisors and teachers, relatives, neighbors, and family friends. Let them know your career interests and plans, and find out about their professional path. Ask if they have contacts or suggestions for you to explore.

8. Create a LinkedIn account

Let's be real. You have about 80 social networking accounts, right? Why not make one that could help you get a job or internship? LinkedIn is the most popular professional networking site out there currently, and people everywhere are signing up for it. This is a great resource to look for jobs, connect with alums and employers, and post your resume for companies to find. If you need help, check out their Getting Started videos at <http://learn.linkedin.com/students/>

9. Get current with your industry

Do you know what it takes to excel in the job you want? Make sure you are up-to-date with the latest trends, changes, and patterns in your future career field. Use this time to read blogs, check out professional organizations, and establish new relationships with people within various related companies.

10. Clean up your Internet image

What happens on the Internet usually stays on the Internet, and sometimes, that's not a good thing. Run a couple of Google searches on yourself and see what comes up. Maybe that also involves changing your Facebook and Twitter privacy settings or making sure your profile doesn't include anything you don't want employers to see. Companies are checking candidates' social networking profiles more and more every day, so it's a good idea to assure that yours makes you look the way you want to be perceived.

**Have fun, safe
Thanksgiving and
winter breaks!**

**Good luck with first
semester finals, and
look for our January
issue when you come
back!**